

## CITYVIEW

City of Hamilton Planning and Development Department

1996

# ENVIRONMENT - ISSUES AND CHOICES

"... with incomprehensible stupidity, we befoul and destroy our one home, this beautiful planet, in a greed-fuelled quest for growth and development at any cost. Plants, animals, entire ecosystems, and native cultures are being wiped out at a bewildering rate, the variety replaced by a dangerous bland uniformity. Sadly, many of us have lost touch with both our cultural roots and our place in the complex, interrelated web of Nature."

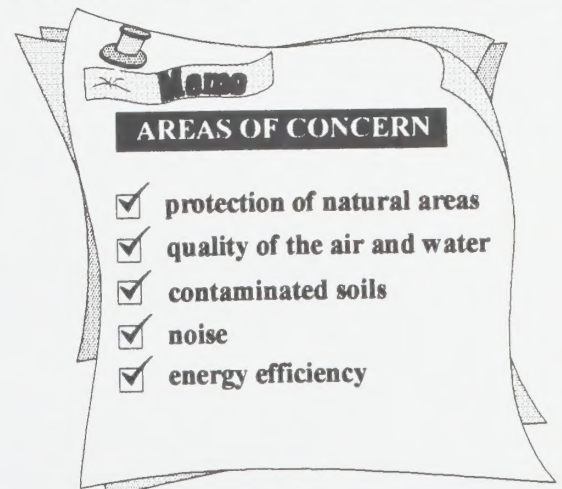
*Quote: "The Niagara Escarpment - A Portfolio" by Pat & Rosemarie Keough*

What do we mean when we talk about "the environment"?

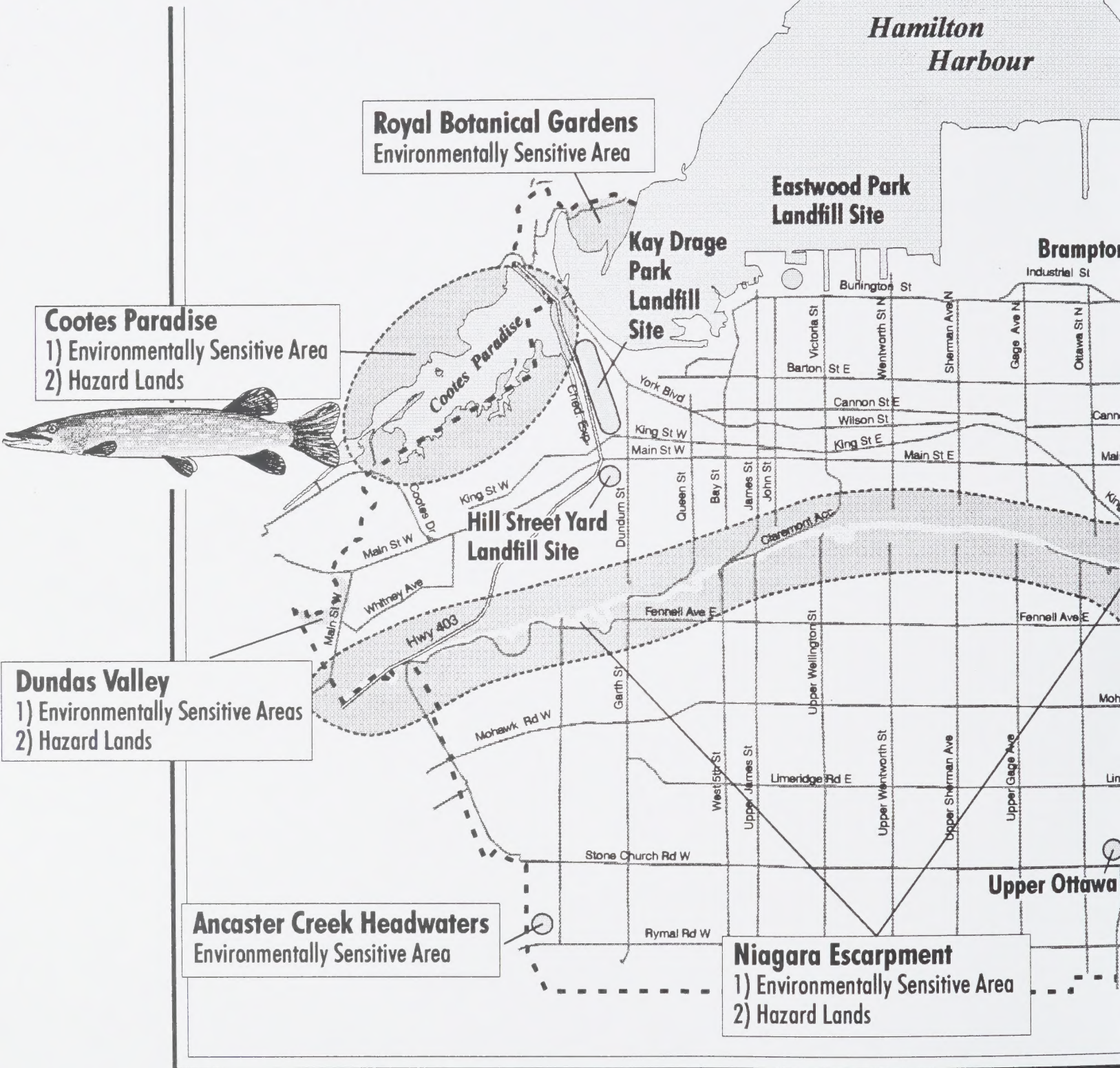
"**Environment**" means different things to different people. To some it means the natural things around us, things that are green such as trees, grass, flowers, wildlife, open spaces, valleys, rivers, marshes and lakes.

Hamilton is blessed with an abundance of natural areas such as: the Niagara Escarpment, Hamilton Harbour, Lake Ontario and the Beach Strip, Red Hill Creek and its valley, Van Wagners Marsh, Cootes Paradise - just to name a few. There are also more formal open spaces such as City parks. Both the natural areas and parks are important to us for a multitude of recreational activities (walking, bike riding, baseball, etc.), aesthetic and economic benefits. What you may not realize is that these areas are important for:

- ⇒ maintaining and improving the quality of air and water which sustains life;
- ⇒ reducing erosion, sedimentation and flooding; and,
- ⇒ providing a home to large varieties of animal and plant life that depend on these areas for their food source. In some cases, there could be plant or animal life that may be rare to the City, Region, the Province or the country.



# AREAS OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN



# HIGHLIGHTS OF HAMILTON'S ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNITY

The Niagara Escarpment was recognized a World Biosphere Reserve on April 9, 1990 by the United Nations.

**Toll Gate Ponds**  
Environmentally Sensitive Area

Van Wagners Marsh and Cootes Paradise are Class 1 Provincially Significant Wetlands - Cootes Paradise is also a Provincially Significant Area of Natural and Scientific Interest

**Red Hill Creek/  
Van Wagners Marsh**  
1) Environmentally Sensitive Area  
2) Hazard Lands



Hamilton Harbour was identified by the International Joint Commission on Water Quality as one of five Great Lakes "hot spots" for pollution. The Remedial Action Plan has given rise to the Fish and Wildlife Habitat Restoration project designed to restore fish and wildlife habitat in the Harbour.

## What are the issues?

The Province is making dramatic changes to Provincial laws and significantly reducing funding to agencies and organizations whose mandate is environmental protection. These moves greatly reduce the Province's commitment to protecting the environment. How should the City respond?

## Should the residents take a more proactive role in environmental protection?

Are the rules preserving our special natural areas enough to ensure long term environmental protection?

What are the important issues facing the City regarding physical growth and development and improving the local environment?

Should the City provide incentives to developers who go beyond the requirements of environmental protection?

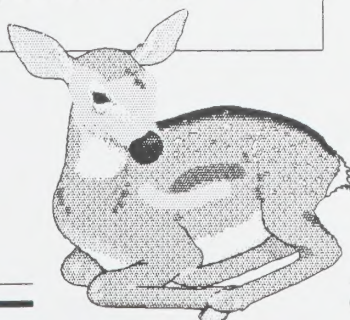
Yard Landfill Site

**Stoney Creek Ravine**  
Hazard Lands

**Red Hill Creek/King's Forest**  
1) Environmentally Sensitive Area  
2) Hazard Lands

**Niagara Escarpment/Felker's Falls**  
1) Environmentally Sensitive Area  
2) Hazard Lands

Landfill Site



This is the first of three brochures on the environment. It deals with the natural open spaces and features which are special. Other brochures will deal with air and water quality, noise, energy and contaminated soils.

## THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Hamilton's most prominent natural features include the Niagara Escarpment, the Red Hill Creek valley, Lake Ontario, Hamilton Harbour and Cootes Paradise. Other important features are streams, wetlands, water bodies, forests, woodlots and other areas of natural and scientific interest. Past human activities have taken vital elements out of the natural settings with little regard to their long term effects on the environment.

Many of these special areas are not limited to just Hamilton. The Niagara Escarpment travels through Hamilton between Niagara and Tobermory. Lake Ontario borders onto numerous southern Ontario municipalities, as well as those in northern New York State. Such features are not only important to the City, but to larger areas. Provincial and federal laws and policies are in place to ensure their protection.

### Who looks after the natural environment?

The natural functions and physical qualities of the City's natural areas should be managed in such a way that they are protected, preserved and enhanced. The City's Official Plan includes policies to protect these "sensitive" areas of the environment (eg. hazard lands, environmentally sensitive areas, trees). These policies reflect Provincial or Federal policy.

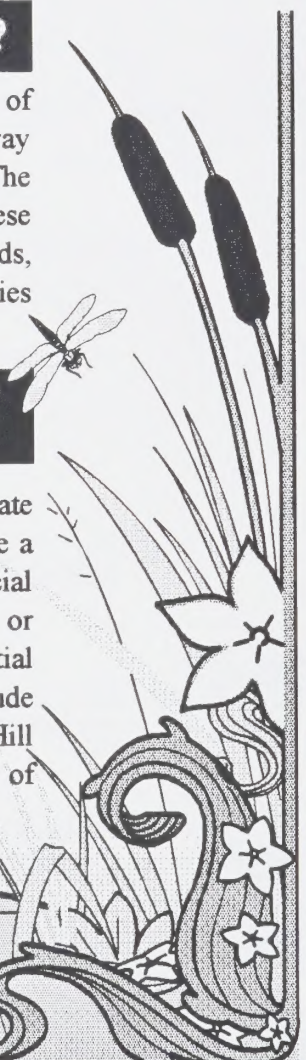
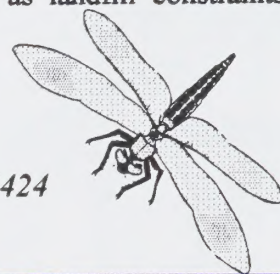
### What kind of environmentally "sensitive" areas do we have and where are they?

**Hazard Lands** are lands that, if built on, create hazardous conditions which are severe enough to pose a risk to occupants, loss of life, property damage and social disruption. They may be susceptible to flooding or erosion, the ground may be unstable or other potential dangerous physical conditions. "Hazard lands" include the steep slopes of the Niagara Escarpment and Red Hill Creek Valley, Van Wagners Marsh, and the edges of Cootes Paradise and the streams that empty into it.

**Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs)** are ecologically significant areas which should be preserved in their natural state. Limited development may be allowed if a detailed study is done which identifies the impacts of any development. The Niagara Escarpment, the Red Hill Creek and Kings Forest, and the Dundas Valley are recognized as ESAs.

**Landfill Constraint Areas** are those lands known to be former municipal or industrial waste disposal sites. These areas have a potential for methane gas and liquid to flow across the ground from the edge of the affected lands. These may be a risk to property, human health and safety. The Upper Ottawa Landfill Site, Eastwood Park, Kay Drage Park, the Hill Street Yard, and Brampton Street are recognized as landfill constraints areas.

For more information on this brochure, please contact at  
Caroline Floroff at (905) 546-4424  
CityView brochure 15 of 24



### CITYVIEW

CityView Hamilton's Plan for Tomorrow is your opportunity to present your ideas and thoughts on the future of Hamilton.

Your ideas will ultimately form the basis of a new Official Plan for the City of Hamilton.

Staff of Hamilton's Planning and Development Department are available to answer your questions on any facet of CityView.

### Ways to Contact Us...

Joanne Hickey-Evans at (905) 546-4229  
Keith Exance at (905) 546-4158

FAX (905) 546-4202

E-Mail : [city.hamilton.planning@freenet.hamilton.on.ca](mailto:city.hamilton.planning@freenet.hamilton.on.ca)

### Mail to...

City of Hamilton  
Planning and Development Department  
7th Floor, City Hall  
71 Main Street West  
Hamilton, Ontario  
L8N 3T4